

**CB12 Traffic and Transportation Committee Meeting  
February 6, 2023, at 7:00 PM**

**Committee Members** – Chair, Debby Nabavian; Asst. Chair Leo Jimenez; Mary Anderson; Jim Berlin; Jody Hirson; Bruce Robertson. **CB12M Board Members** – Madam Chair Kathy Diaz, Tonya Bonner, Maria Luna, Wayne Benjamin, Danny Bonilla, Marshall Vanderpool (public member). **CB12M Staff** – Shinelle Paniagau, Ebenezer Smith; **Elected Officials:** Council Member Carmen De La Rosa; **OTI/City Bridges:** Stacey Gardener, Brett Sikoff, Rob Sakota, Nick Colvin; **DOT:** Lyle Blackwood; **Futures Ignite/WHEELS:** Genesis, Noelia Guzman, Brenda Mestiza, Anais Martinez, Carlos Genao; **Public:** Attendees

**Call to order 7:07 p.m.**

**1. Chair Debby Nabavian introduces committee members, and welcomes Council Member De La Rosa, CB12M Chair Kathy Diaz, and meeting attendees.**

- Council Member Carmen De La Rosa provides background to OTI’s recent outreach to her office, and CB12M. This is a conversation surrounding the installation of the 5G devices, and the committee meeting space will allow for learning information regarding the initiative and devices, and expression of public concerns about it. She also mentions that they met with OTI in mid-January to discuss 4 proposed sites in Washington Heights/Inwood. District 12 is an equity district – equitable deployment of devices mandate chosen based on lack of broadband options, lower median annual income, lack of overall Link devices, and a high level of pedestrian traffic. The Council Member’s Office created a form for feedback, in which she received lots of concerns about the technological science behind it, health concerns of the sites in proximity to residential buildings, and lack of outreach by OTI prior to installment (construction commenced for one of the sites on Cabrini Blvd).
- CB12M Chair Kathy Diaz shares and echoes CM De La Rosa’s willingness to allow for community input prior to device installations in our community. She learned about the initiative in January and wanted to provide a space for all community residents, partners, and stakeholders to share their concerns.

**2. Chair Debby Nabavian Introduces the NYC Office of Technology & Innovations partnering with City Bridges on presenting “5G Link Towers Installations” in our neighborhood.**

**3. OTI/City Bridge Presentation:** Stacey Gardner introduces CEO of City Bridge Nick Colvin. She also explains her role at The NYC Office of Technology & Innovation, and their partnership with City Bridge. City Bridge is one of ten companies NYC has franchised to install 5G devices on our public streets.

- Link devices provide free calling, free WIFI, and free 5G access on street. OTI oversees the contract they have with the private company that pays to use NYC’s “Right of Way” (streets/sidewalks) for the provision of telecommunication. It is not a taxpayer endeavor, but it is revenue making.
- OTI conducts outreach in communities where the devices are installed to share information and get feedback for the proposed sites. OTI and NYC give community

residents and stakeholders a 60-Day comment period prior to the installations of Link devices.

- The purpose of Link NYC is to provide free and equitable access to connectivity, information, and wireless service through free public WIFI, free nationwide calling, emergency services access, access to government & social services websites, and provide free advertisements for community boards, non-profit organizations, and local businesses. They also provide free charging USB ports.
- Why 5G? Reported that 44% of people in NYC use their cellular service primarily over home internet connection. Digital desert residents are far more likely to use public WIFI or mobile device to replace home internet service but lack affordable and reliable access to both (29% reported its too expensive and 21% reported no in-home internet connection, while 63% of NYCHA residents use free public WIFI at least a few times a month, and 13% rely exclusively on mobile data for internet at home). These devices support the evolution of cellular infrastructure to keep up with demand and 5G technology.
- Difference with existing Link devices? These 5G devices are purpose built wireless telecommunication infrastructure providing maximum utility to minimize street clutter and construction disruption. It includes a digital safety net – WIFI, Phone calling, emergency and city services. Lastly, it replaces existing pay phones and new installations to target gaps in cellular service.
- 5G devices are contained and sleek that support 4 carriers provide features and don't clutter our streets with bulky infrastructure.
- 5G devices require fiber infrastructure allowing expansion of services & upgraded 5G infrastructure.
- There are various restrictions mandated when choosing sites prior to device installations, which include(s): No advertising screens in residential zones; no more than 1 link device installed on each block and only on one side of the street; at least 200 ft from another Link device; Any Link adjacent to parks require approval from DPR; Any link in or adjacent to historic landmark requires approval of the Landmark Preservation Committee.
- Link 5G Candidate sites (mentioned in meeting with CM De La Rosa & Chair Kathy Diaz:
  - Non-Ad: *689 Fort Washington Ave, 100 Overlook Terrace, 727 Fort Washington Ave*
  - Ad: 11 Nagle Ave
- Link 5G Candidate sites mentioned in T&T committee meeting (note: OTI did not provide outreach or notification to the elected officials or CB12M about these proposed sites listed below):
  - Ad: *2178 Amsterdam Ave, 2194 Amsterdam Ave, 4188 Broadway, 3489 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, 2145 Amsterdam Ave, 515 W 182<sup>nd</sup> St*
- *Debby N:* Questions the six proposed candidate sites mentioned in the presentation and makes it clear that it is the first time she is hearing about these locations.
- *CM De La Rosa:* Very concerned and disappointed that the six proposed candidate sites were not mentioned prior, including a missed email sent in October 2022 regarding the first four candidate sites. It was not mentioned prior to the committee meeting when OTI presented to the CM office. Two proposed sites on Amsterdam

Ave are near schools, and that OTI hasn't conducted outreach or provided the schools with an opportunity for input. CM also warned that no construction should happen on Fort Washington before the 60-day comment period and receiving community feedback.

- *Kathy Diaz:* Also, very concerned that this wasn't mentioned in the conversation had with OTI prior to the committee meeting and feels that the residents in the six proposed sites in Amsterdam Ave should have some input and allowed to share their concerns and disapproval as well. Admits that she found out about the first installation from a Patch article voicing the concerns of the surrounding areas residents and neighbors. She also suggested an extension of the comment period to allow the residents and community stakeholders to provide feedback. Requested a tailored presentation to provide more information to community residents in Amsterdam Ave.
  - *Stacey, Brett, and Rob:* The process is memorialized by the MBPO, and requires notification to local elected officials, community boards, & BIDs. The OTI sends new candidate locations with a letter to all entities allowing for the 60-day comment period.
  - *DN:* Confirms with CM De La Rosa that there was a letter with first phase, but OTI hadn't sent letter with new proposed sites. Stacey admits that she may not have sent the letter. Reminds OTI and City Bridges that they are representing the city so they should provide concrete information and facts related to health concerns and other questions.
  - *Jim Berlin:* Refers to a candidate location near a park, and highlights that it is a bird sanctuary with no access for people. Why was this location selected?
    - *Rob/Nick:* Explain that locations must follow FCC regulations, and the sites are selected in conjunction with the considered restrictions.
  - *Jay Mazur:* Wanted to clarify that this isn't a city agency initiative, but it is directed by The Mayor's Office.
  - *Osi Kaminer:* Health issues and concerns about 5G towers, especially for the proximity to schools and potential hazard/risk to children. Can it cause cancer?
    - *Stacey/Rob/Brett:* No health concerns and cannot cause cancer. These 10 privatized companies can deploy equipment and are required to follow all FCC regulations and standards, so they won't cause any risk to anyone's health. No studies indicating that the towers cause health concerns.
  - *14 attendees spoke in the public session. Public attendees all voiced similar concerns and disapproval regarding the proposed locations due to proximity to residential zones. Their main concerns centered around long-term potential health risks, and overall lack of outreach by OTI. Many attendees asked the committee and the board to reject and/or oppose the installation of these devices as other Community Boards have done in other areas of NYC.*

#### **4. Future Ignites Presentation:**

- Genesis introduces herself, and four students from WHEELS who will share their insight about the program.

- Futures Ignite is a non-profit organization that works with high school students at The Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning school where they amplify young people to determine their college careers and leadership future.
- The students talk about their initiative, Cleaner Corridor, and how the committee can assist with current and long-term plans and goals.
- There is a historical lack of input from people of color and low-income communities when it comes to land use decisions. This has resulted in many schools in our areas built near highways and truck routes that have contributed to poor air quality resulting in student's physical and mental health risks like asthma. Also sheds light that youth have traditionally been neglected in planning for the design of public spaces.
- Request committee resolution that supports a school street for Wheels/IS 143, and requests collaboration between DOT and NYPD 34<sup>th</sup> precinct to enforce temporary full street closure permit for 2023 open streets season.
  - *Debby N:* Open streets application is April – Futures Ignite submitted in January to begin pilot in May for two school days (Wed and Fri, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Explains that this isn't a resolution item.
  - *Genesis:* Requested two days of the school week to not contribute to ongoing parking issues in our community. Previously granted open street for the school. They have issues with other people parking during the requested time. Seeking to eventually apply for an Open Street Plaza, like Yeshiva University. Asking for support to get 34<sup>th</sup> precinct to enforce in this area. Public safety – play street (close street) allows teacher and DOE staff to still park in this area, although they have agreed to not do so on Wednesday and Friday. School street will require not to park on those two days.
  - *Kathy D:* Proposed more outreach to neighboring residential buildings and local businesses explaining initiative. Also suggested to connect with local elected officials for support. Lastly, attending Precinct council meeting requesting support and enforcement from NYPD.

## 5. New Business

- Discussing curbside prioritization and parking for next meeting agenda, and presentation from DOT public space.

## 6. Meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.